

## **Nuclear Science Division Ergonomics Plan**

**6/5/07**

### **Introduction**

Nuclear Science Division's goal is to minimize employee exposure to ergonomic hazards that lead to cumulative trauma disorders and related injuries and illnesses. Ergonomic hazards include industrial hazards (such as hand tool use and heavy lifting) and office hazards (such as computer and related hardware use). For Nuclear Science Division, office hazards are the primary ergonomic concern.

Industrial ergonomic hazards, because they are encountered infrequently by division employees (none have reported an injury caused by industrial ergonomic hazards in the past five years), are best addressed one at a time. That is, ergonomic experts are consulted when an employee identifies a specific industrial ergonomic hazard, and the issues are resolved individually.

Office ergonomic hazards, however, are more frequently encountered by division employees and account for nearly 40% of the division's reported injuries since 2002. Office ergonomics, therefore, is the primary topic of this plan. Nuclear Science Division strives to prevent new and minimize existing injuries to employees who use office computers by providing employees with training ("Ergonomics for Computer Users," EHS060) and workstation evaluations ("Ergonomic Workstation Evaluation," EHS068). This plan describes how training and evaluations are implemented by the division in accordance with PUB-3000, Chapter 17, "Ergonomics."

### **Office Ergonomics Training**

All division employees who use a computer for more than an average of four hours a day must complete the training course, "Ergonomics for Computer Users," EHS060. This requirement is triggered when an employee fills out a job hazards questionnaire (JHQ). The employee's training profile lists the class as a required course.

### **Workstation Evaluations**

Through this ergonomics plan, the Nuclear Science Division methodically provides workstation evaluations to all employees for whom office ergonomics are a potential hazard. Evaluations for pain or discomfort are high priority; other evaluations are performed on a routine basis.

Ergonomic evaluation of a Nuclear Science Division employee's workstation may be automatically requested by the ergonomics database or may be individually requested. Automatic requests are based on the amount of time an employee spends working at a computer (as noted on the JHQ). Individual requests are submitted by anyone who is concerned about the employee's health or work environment, including employees, supervisors, and safety professionals. Reasons for such requests include pain or discomfort, injury prevention, and installation of new computer equipment.

## **Performing Workstation Evaluations**

When a workstation evaluation is requested because the employee has discomfort or pain, an ergonomics expert performs the evaluation. These evaluations are assigned the highest priority to ensure that they are performed promptly, recommendations are implemented in a timely fashion, and the evaluation is closed out as quickly as possible.

When a workstation evaluation is requested for any reason other than discomfort or pain, a trained ergonomics advocate performs the evaluation. Typically the ergonomics database automatically assigns an evaluator. These evaluations are given second-highest priority, after evaluations for pain or discomfort. For a member of the Coalition of University Employees (CUE), the ergonomic advocate must perform the evaluation within 90 days of request (see PUB-3000, Chapter 17.8.1).

In addition, routine workstation evaluations are recommended for some new employees through the JHQ process but are not automatically requested by the ergonomics database. The liaison to the Environment, Health, and Safety (EHS) Division (who is also a trained ergonomics advocate) tracks these evaluations, performing them as time allows and at the convenience of the employee and evaluator.

## **Completing and Closing Out Evaluations**

Workstation evaluations often recommend actions that can't be completed immediately, such as purchasing new computer equipment, obtaining ergonomic accessories, or making changes to a workstation. For an employee who is not a member of CUE, the employee's supervisor is responsible for ensuring that recommendations are implemented as soon as possible (preferably within 30 to 60 days for routine evaluations; sooner if the employee is experiencing discomfort or pain). For a CUE member, the supervisor follows the time limits and documentation requirements stated in PUB-3000, Chapter 17.8.1.

The ergonomic evaluator and/or the division safety coordinator assist the supervisor by tracking the progress of the evaluation. When all recommendations are complete, the supervisor, evaluator, safety coordinator, or EHS liaison closes out the evaluation in the ergonomics database.

## **Tracking Plan Implementation**

At least monthly, the division safety coordinator and EHS liaison meet with an upper-level Nuclear Science Division manager to discuss progress in implementing this plan. They review the number of employees who have completed office ergonomics training and who have had their workstations evaluated. They discuss issues, trends, and solutions to potential problems with meeting the division's goal of preventing new and minimizing existing ergonomic injuries. The safety coordinator or liaison document the monthly review in meeting notes and database reports kept on file.